



Student Enrollment – Standard Operating Procedures

The purpose of this procedure manual is to lay out the minimum expectations regarding enrollment procedures for charter schools authorized by the State Board. Charter operators shall follow all federal and state laws, policies, and regulations even if it is not explicitly stated in these enrollment procedures. These procedures cover:

- [Application, Lottery, and Enrollment](#)
- [Identification of English Learners](#)
- [Enrolling Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Identification of Homeless Students](#)
- [Identification of Immigrant Children and Youth](#)
- [Identification of Students in Foster Care](#)
- [Identification of Migrant Students](#)
- [Forms and Appendices](#)

Application, Lottery, and Enrollment

- Application period and application template
 - By December 31st of every year, each charter school shall notify the State Board of the enrollment period¹ for the upcoming school year. If the school is still growing grades or capacity, the enrollment period and lottery must conclude by March 15 in order to provide timely enrollment estimates to the Department of Education.
 - By December 31st of every year, each charter school shall provide to the State Board the application template that it plans to use during the enrollment period, and the State Board shall review, approve, or ask for revisions by January 10th of every year.
 - Charter schools shall ensure that the application does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age.
 - Charter schools shall translate the application into the languages necessary for the community in which the school is located in, and the charter school will be responsible for the costs of the translation.
 - If a charter school receives more applications than the planned capacity, the charter school shall conduct a lottery in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) § 49-13-113.²
- Initial Funding Estimates

¹ The enrollment period shall be a defined period of time that the charter school will accept applications prior to conducting a lottery.

² State Board LEA Policy 6206 – School Admissions and Enrollment Period

- At the conclusion of the application period and lottery process, if necessary, but no later than March 30th, the charter school will notify the State Board of the following information in order for initial funding estimates to be calculated by the Department of Education:
 - Total enrollment figures for the upcoming school year;
 - Number of students with disabilities and the school system the student would otherwise be enrolled in (if known); and
 - Number of English Learners (if known).
- On the 30th of each month from April through June, the charter school shall notify the State Board of revised enrollment figures, including counts for students with disabilities and English Learners.
 - It is very important to be conservative in enrollment figures and not to overestimate. Overestimating will result in less or no BEP payments for portions of the school year.
 - Once the school has grown to full grade or size capacity, initial funding for the school will be based on prior year enrollment.
- Enrollment of Students
 - As a part of the enrollment process, any student entering school for the first time must present:
 - A birth certificate or officially acceptable evidence of date of birth at the time of registration;³
 - Evidence of a current medical examination⁴
 - Evidence of state-required immunization⁵
 - If a parent is unable to provide requested documentation:
 - If a parent does not have or cannot obtain a birth certificate, it is within the charter school's discretion to determine which documents are acceptable as proof of birth. A charter school cannot deny enrollment based on the inability to produce social security cards or numbers, health forms, birth certificates, or other information. A charter school can only require immunization records for enrollment.⁶ Please see the McKinney-Vento section of the document for additional information regarding students who are homeless.
 - No family should be sent home to collect additional documentation prior to the enrolling the student, and if the charter school asks for this additional documentation, the school shall immediately state that no documentation will be used in relation to immigration status.⁷

³ TCA 49-6-3008(b)

⁴ TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.08(2)(a); TCA 49-6-5004(a)

⁵ TCA 49-6-5001(c)

⁶ T.C.A. 49-3-5001, State Board LEA Policy 6203 – Physical Examinations and Immunizations

⁷ Tennessee Department of Education, English as a Second Language Program Guide, August 2016

- If a student does not have the required immunizations, the school shall work with the family to schedule an immediate appointment for the student to receive the required immunizations.⁸
- Proof of residency:
 - The charter school will use all resources available to them to assist in determining if enrolled students reside in the jurisdiction of the charter school, including but not limited to proof of residency, utility bills, real estate records, and home visits. It is within the discretion of the charter school to determine which documents are acceptable as proof of residency.
- Within one (1) business day of a student's enrollment in the charter school, the student's information must be entered into the State Board's approved student information system by the charter school.
- If the family of a student chooses to withdraw the student from the charter school, the school shall complete the following steps:
 - Have the parent(s)/guardian(s) complete the school's withdrawal document(s), indicating the reason(s) they are seeking withdrawal (a sample [Student Withdrawal Form](#) is contained within these procedures);
 - Schedule a meeting with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the reason(s) for withdrawal and school options (a [Student Exit Interview](#) sample template is contained within these procedures);
 - Update the student's enrollment information and reason for withdrawal in the State Board's student information system within one (1) business day of the student withdrawing; and
 - Provide the student's records when requested by the school or district in which the student will be enrolling.
- Record request
 - Once a student enrolls in the charter school, the school shall immediately request the student's records from the student's previous school.
 - For charter schools located in Shelby County, the following process shall be used:
 - Contact the school from which the student is transferring to request a copy of the student's cumulative file, including the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or behavior plans, if applicable. The charter school should make multiple attempts to obtain the student's records directly from the previous school.
 - If the student's previous school is unresponsive or unable to provide the student's records, then the charter school shall contact the Shelby County Schools central office to request a copy of the student's records.
 - If Shelby County Schools is unable to provide the student's records, the charter school shall contact the State Board.

⁸ Ibid.

- For charter schools located in Davidson County, the following process shall be used:
 - Contact the school from which the student is transferring to request a copy of the student's cumulative file, including the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or behavior plans, if applicable. The charter school should make multiple attempts to obtain the student's records directly from the previous school.
 - If the student's previous school is unresponsive or unable to provide the student's records, then the charter school shall contact the Metro Nashville Public Schools central office to request a copy of the student's records.
 - If Metro Nashville Public Schools is unable to provide the student's records, the charter school shall contact the State Board.
- When a student with an IEP enrolls in the charter school, the school is required to complete the IEP development process within 30 days of enrollment, even if the school is unable to obtain the student's cumulative records within 30 days. See the [Enrolling Students with Disabilities](#) section of these procedures for more information.

Identification of English Learners⁹

- Home Language Survey
 - The U.S. Department of Education requires that all school districts identify in a timely manner English Learner (EL) students who need language acquisition services.¹⁰
 - To do this, the Tennessee Department of Education requires districts in Tennessee to administer the Home Language Survey (HLS) to all students one time during their initial enrollment. For the HLS in Tennessee, three questions are required:¹¹
 1. What is the first language the student learned to speak?
 2. What language does the student speak most often outside of school?
 3. What language do people usually speak in the student's home?
 - The charter school may also ask additional questions at this time such as the language in which the parent(s)/guardian(s) prefer to receive information from the school and about the services and education the student received at a previous school (if applicable).
 - The charter school shall translate the HLS into all languages necessary for the school's community and provide interpretation services, as necessary. The charter school is responsible for all translation and interpretation costs.
 - If possible, the Tennessee Department of Education recommends that the HLS is not included in the enrollment packet and is given to parent(s)/guardian(s) as a separate document so that its purpose can be thoroughly explained.¹²

⁹ State Board LEA Policy 4207 – English Learners

¹⁰ English Learner Tool Kit, USDOE, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap1.pdf>

¹¹ TDOE, ESL Program Guide; English Learner Tool Kit, USDOE, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap1.pdf>

¹² TDOE, ESL Program Guide

- The HLS should only be administered to a student one time in their academic career, and the original HLS should be in a student's cumulative record.¹³
- The charter school shall make multiple attempts to obtain the original HLS from the student's previous school. If a new HLS is completed by the parent(s)/guardian(s), the charter school must inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that if the student's permanent records contain the original HLS, the original HLS will be kept and the new HLS will be disregarded but attached to the original HLS for record keeping purposes.
- If there are discrepancies between the original HLS and the new HLS, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall sign off on any discrepancies or changes.
- If a parent/guardian lists a language other than English in any question on the HLS, the charter school shall initiate the procedure for assessing a student's English proficiency.¹⁴
- Assessing Eligibility for Language Services
 - If a student is identified as non-English Language Background (NELB), the charter school should immediately review the student's cumulative record to find any documentation on previous screenings, assessments, or services received.
 - If no documentation is available or if after attempting to access proficiency documentation from the student's previous school or district, the charter school receives no information on the student in a timely manner, then an ESL teacher trained to give the screener assessment should administer the W-APT or WIDA Screener.¹⁵
 - A student who enrolls in the charter school prior to the beginning of school shall receive the W-APT or WIDA screener assessment within 30 days of the beginning of the school year.¹⁶
 - A student who enrolls during the school year shall receive the W-APT or WIDA screener assessment within 14 calendar days of enrollment.¹⁷
 - If the student scores a grade-level adjusted score of 5.0 or higher on the W-APT or WIDA screener, the student is not eligible for ESL services. The charter school should code the student as "N" in the State Board's student information system.
 - If the student scores a grade level adjusted score of less than 5.0 on the W-APT or WIDA screener, the student requires ESL services. The charter school should code the student as "L" in the State Board's student information system.
 - The State Board will audit as necessary to verify the data related to EL students in the State Board's student information system and EIS.
- Maintaining Records on English Learners

¹³ State Board may randomly audit students' cumulative records to ensure that the original HLSs are included in the records.

¹⁴ TDOE, ESL Program Guide

¹⁵ Any ESL teacher administering the W-APT or WIDA Screener must be certified as competent by WIDA. The W-APT is required for Kindergarten students. The WIDA Screener is required for all other students, grades 1-12.

¹⁶ TDOE, ESL Program Guide

¹⁷ Ibid.

- The Tennessee Department of Education requires all school districts to maintain a current list of all NELB students.¹⁸
- In order to comply with this requirement, by September 1st and February 1st, each authorized charter school shall ensure all NELB students are accurately coded in PowerSchool including names, their home languages, their school grade levels, and any other information TDOE requires to be reported. The State Board will pull this information from EIS, but the school will be required to submit additional details as necessary.
- Charter schools shall maintain the following information for any student identified as an English Learner for their individual student profiles:¹⁹
 - Assessment information (e.g., standardized tests taken, scores, and dates)
 - Academic information (e.g., courses taken, grades, attendance and promotion/retention)
 - Entry date into U.S. schools
 - Entry date into the district
 - Years of schooling in the student's home language
 - Educational history, including any interrupted education
 - Testing for vision and hearing
 - Physical or psychological conditions that may affect learning
 - Classroom observations by teachers
 - Enrollment history and criteria used for placement in special services (e.g., ESL, speech therapy, special education)
- A student's cumulative folder should include the following:
 - Original HLS
 - Intake data for ELs:
 - Date arriving in a U.S. school
 - First language spoken by student
 - Any available documents (e.g., birth certificate, I-94, other immigration documents, etc.)
 - W-APT or WIDA scores
 - English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment scores for all years served in ESL, if applicable
 - Notes from IEP meetings, if applicable
- Parental Notification
 - Charter schools shall notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student's eligibility for ESL services after the initial assessment and subsequently on an annual basis. The notifications must be sent in a language that the parent(s)/guardian(s) understand and include:²⁰
 - The reason for identifying the student as an English Learner;

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ State Board LEA Policy 4207 – English Learners; TDOE ESL Manual

- The student's level of English language proficiency, including how the level was assessed, and the status of the student's academic achievement;
 - Methods of instruction used in the program, methods of instruction in other available programs, and how they differ;
 - How the program meets the educational strengths and needs of the student, and how the program will help the student reach English language proficiency and meet academic standards;
 - Program exit requirements, rate of transition to standard instructional program classroom, and expected rate of high school graduation;
 - How the program meets the goals of an EL student with an IEP, if applicable; and
 - Information of the parents'/guardians' rights to withdraw the student from the program or choose another program or method of instruction, if available.²¹
- Timelines for parental notification:
 - Initial placement:²²
 - If a student was identified as eligible for ESL services prior to the beginning of the school year, parental notification of the initial assessment and placement must be sent within 30 days of the beginning of the school year.
 - If a student was identified as eligible for ESL services during the school year, the parental notification of the initial assessment and placement must be sent within two weeks of placement in an ESL program.
 - Annual notification:²³
 - Parental notification shall be sent within the first 30 days of the beginning of school.
 - If a parent/guardian chooses to waive ESL services, a signed waiver must be obtained by the charter school on an annual basis.

Enrolling Students with Disabilities

A charter school may not deny enrollment to any student because of a disability nor may they ask if a student has an IEP until the student is accepted in the school through the lottery process. After the student is accepted in the school, the charter school shall take the following steps to obtain the necessary documentation to appropriately serve all students:

- Ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) through enrollment forms or through an enrollment meeting guardian if the student has an IEP or has received special education services. If yes, the school can ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) for copies of the IEP and any supporting documentation.

²¹ State Board may randomly audit the charter school's records to ensure the annual notification occurred.

²² State Board LEA Policy 4207 – English Learners; TDOE ESL Manual

²³ State Board LEA Policy 4207 – English Learners; TDOE ESL Manual

- Call the case manager from the student's previous school to set up a transition meeting, if possible.
- Immediately initiate the records request process to receive the student's cumulative records.
- Immediately initiate the IEP team process and complete the required IEP development within 30 days of the student's enrollment at the school.
- If the student was previously enrolled in a school out of state, the school must hold an eligibility meeting with a school psychologist within 30 days of the student's enrollment at the school.

Once a student enrolls in the charter school, the school shall immediately begin compiling and uploading all necessary documentation, including signature pages, to EasyIEP. The State Board's EasyIEP Monitoring procedures outline all the documents that are required to be uploaded.

Identification of Homeless Students

A charter school may not deny enrollment to any student because their homeless status nor may they ask if a student lacks a permanent residence until after the student has enrolled in the school. After the student is enrolled in the school, the charter school shall take the following steps to quickly identify homeless students and provide access to education and support services:

- Include a student residency questionnaire²⁴ as a part of the school's enrollment packet.
- If a parent/guardian indicates that the student's residence is not fixed, regular, or adequate, initiate the determination of status process under McKinney-Vento.
- Please see the State Board's operating procedures for McKinney-Vento for additional information about this process.

If a student is identified as homeless, the school should use the student classification of (H) in the student information system.

Identification of Immigrant Children and Youth

Students who are immigrants to the United States are not necessarily English Learners, and federal law requires the State Board to maintain accurate data related to immigrant students. As a part of the enrollment process, authorized charter schools are required to develop procedures for the identification of immigrant students (which should not be misconstrued as identifying the status of immigrant students) and enter the accurate information in the student information system.

To gather this information, below are two questions to include as a part of a school's enrollment forms that are considered best practice for the identification of immigrant students:

- Country of Birth: _____

²⁴ A sample student residency questionnaire is available in the McKinney-Vento Operating Procedures document. Schools may adapt this sample for their use.

- Date the student first enrolled in a U.S. school: _____

A student is considered an immigrant for the first three (3) years they are in the U.S. Each authorized charter school must accurately enter the information into the State Board's student information system and ensure that it is correctly reported in EIS. The State Board will monitor this data for accuracy on an ongoing basis.

Identification of Students in Foster Care

Students in foster care shall be immediately enrolled if accepted through the enrollment period or lottery, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (i.e., academic records, immunization records, health records, proof of residency). After enrolling a student, the charter school shall then contact the student's prior school for relevant records. Enrollment is defined as the child or youth in foster care regularly attending and fully participating in school while having their educational needs met.

For additional information about educating students in foster care, see the Students in Foster Care – Operating Procedures.

Identification of Migrant Students

- Screening of students
 - All authorized charter schools shall screen all enrolled students annually to identify any students that may qualify for services through the Tennessee Migrant Education Program.
 - At the beginning of each school year and if new students enroll during the school year, all new and previously enrolled students shall complete the occupational survey. Sample forms and questionnaires are included in the Migrant Education Program procedures document.
 - The completed questionnaire shall be a part of each student's cumulative record, and the State Board will regularly audit for compliance.
- Submission of Occupational Surveys
 - If any of the three questions on the occupational survey has a response of "yes", a copy of the survey with the student's information must be securely sent to the State Board's Migrant Education Liaison. The survey can be sent via the school's ownCloud folder.
 - The State Board Migrant Education Liaison will submit the completed form to the Tennessee Migrant Education Program for further review.
 - If a student is identified as qualifying for services through the Migrant Education Program, the State Board Migrant Education Liaison will be notified and receive a Certificate of Eligibility for the student. In turn, the State Board contact will notify the school's migrant education coordinator that a student has qualified for services.
 - The Certificate of Eligibility shall be kept on file in a student's cumulative record and with the State Board's migrant education liaison.

- Within seven (7) business days of notification that a student qualifies for services, the school must code the student with an (I) in the State Board's student information system.
- Individual Student Record
 - If a student receives services from the Migrant Education Program and withdraws from the school, the school leader or designee is responsible for completing the Individual Student Record (ISR) before withdrawing the student.
 - The completed ISR shall be sent to the State Board's Migrant Education Liaison within fourteen (14) days of the student being withdrawn from the student information system.
 - The State Board's Migrant Education Liaison will send the completed ISR to the Tennessee Migrant Education Program.
- For additional information about serving migrant students, see the Migrant Education Program – Operating Procedures.



Forms and Appendices

- [Student Withdrawal Form](#) – *sample template*
- [Student Exit Interview Form](#) – *sample template*



Student Withdrawal Form

Please complete all the fields below to request withdrawal for your student. Once complete, the school will complete the withdrawal process for the student. Prior to the student withdrawing, an exit interview will be scheduled with school administrators.

Student Information		
Last Name:	First Name:	Middle Initial:
School Name:	Grade Level:	Gender:
Current Address:		
New Address (if different):		
Parent/Guardian Name:		Phone Number:
Student Services: <input type="checkbox"/> IEP <input type="checkbox"/> 504 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):		
Withdrawal/Transfer Information		
Reason for Withdrawal: <input type="checkbox"/> Moving/Relocation <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Issues <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Culture/Discipline Concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):		
Explanation:		
Transferring to: District: <input type="checkbox"/> SCS <input type="checkbox"/> MNPS <input type="checkbox"/> ASD <input type="checkbox"/> Out of State <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): School Name:		
Acknowledgement		
By signing below, I affirm that I am requesting a withdrawal for the above named student. I certify that the withdrawal information and reason(s) provided above are accurate. I understand that the school will finalize the withdrawal and conduct an exit interview with me prior to the withdrawal.		

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Exit Interview Form

1. Attendee Information		
Student:		
Parent/Guardian:		
Principal or designee:		
Other (specify relationship):		
Other (specify relationship):		
Other (specify relationship):		
2. Withdrawal Information		
Reason(s) for Withdrawal (Please be specific):		
What specific actions has the school taken to support your child?		
What more could the school have done to support your child?		
3. Transfer Information		
New School and District:		
What made this school a better fit your student?		
4. Acknowledgement		
I affirm that this withdrawal request was initiated by the parent/guardian of the above named student and the above named persons participated in an exit interview.		
Parent/Guardian Name:	Parent/Guardian Signature:	Date:
Principal Name:	Principal Signature:	Date: